

Iran Election Update

May 23, 2013

- Alef News [reports](#) that although presidential candidate Saeed Jalili made a campaign visit to Qom and [met](#) with influential high-ranking clerics, he did not in fact meet with the senior cleric Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, whose endorsement would be a major campaign prize. Alef cites the reasons ranging from the Perseverance Front (Yadzi's political group) denying Jalili's request for a meeting to Ayatollah Yazdi not even being in Qom yesterday and Jalili not necessarily wanting to meet with Ayatollah Yazdi because Yazdi had not endorsed him when he announced his candidacy.
- Raja News [reports](#) and lists the 51 Persian news websites that are either backing or supportive of presidential candidate Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf.
- Presidential candidate Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf will officially [start](#) his presidential campaign tomorrow in Khorramshahr. [Photos](#) posted by ILNA illustrate its symbolic nature as tomorrow marks the 11th anniversary of the liberation of the city as it was heavily ravaged by Iraqi forces during the Iran-Iraq War.
- In a speech in front of over 2,000 in the city of Bushehr, presidential candidate Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf [said](#), "I will form a social and public government... with the spirit of farmers, artists, workers, intellectuals, and different ethnic groups."
- When asked about if any of the 2+1 Coalition candidates will withdraw, coalition member Ali Akbar Velayati [said](#) "all three coalition candidates will work alongside each other until the end and then a decision will be made." He also [promised](#), "(If elected) One of my administration's emergency actions will be to contain inflation in 100 days."
- Disqualified but hopeful presidential candidate Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei [said](#), "If I am confirmed I will win the presidency by a unanimous vote."
- Reformist presidential candidate Mohammed Aref [said](#) he hopes to be one of the final two or three candidates in the election. Aref also stated that former President Mohammed Khatami will soon declare his position on the remaining candidates. He continued, "I am not in the position to comment about Mr. Rafsanjani's disqualification, but I am sorry that it happened." Aref left open the possibility to join forces with candidate Hassan Rouhani by saying, "I am interested in a consensus (with him)." Aref predicted if there is a reformist victory in the elections, "we might change our tactics and methods but overall our foreign policy will not change."
- Fars News posted photos of presidential candidates Mohammed Reza [Aref](#), Ali Akbar [Velayati](#), and former candidate Mohammad Hassan [Abutorabi Fard](#) as they participate in the Conference on Islamic Awakening, Future Horizons, and the Election.
- Tabnak News [posted](#) photos of presidential candidate Mohsen Rezaei spending his first official day on the campaign trail in the southern Sistan-Baluchestan province meeting with citizens and tribal chiefs in the cities of Chabahar, Nikshahr, Iranshahr, Khash, and Zabol.
- English-language news PressTV reports that disqualified presidential candidate Hashemi Rafsanjani [says](#) "the country needs unity and calm in order to pass through the current difficult times." PressTV also [notes](#) that presidential candidate Saeed Jalili said, "an Islamic model must be used in various fields such as economy and culture, adding that improving public welfare is the ultimate goal of Islam."
- Sayed Hassan Khomeini, the grandson of the founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini, [wrote](#) a letter to former president Rafsanjani and said he could not believe the news that Rafsanjani was disqualified.

By Hanif Zarrabi-Kashani



Additional Iran Election Updates are available [here](#).

Election date is June 14, 2013.